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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2528
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RUYNAAAC/COMNAVFORJAPAN YOKOSUKA JA PRIORITY
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY
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INFO RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA 3674
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RUEHNAG/AMCONSUL NAGOYA 1344
RUEHKSO/AMCONSUL SAPPORO 4211
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE 7476
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SIPDIS

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USTR FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE;
TREASURY FOR OASIA/IMI;
SECDEF FOR OASD/PA;
CP BUTLER OKINAWA FOR AREA FIELD OFFICE;
PACOM HONOLULU FOR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY ADVISOR

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: TOKYO MEDIA REACTION - TAIWAN

11. LEAD STORIES: Lead items on Thursday morning included the IMF's World Economic Outlook report saying that the global economy would likely contract 1.3 percent this year.

12. "Concern about 'Hollowing Out' of U.S.-Taiwan Relations" The liberal Asahi wrote (4/23): "The Taiwan Relations Act, which was passed in 1979 when the U.S. and China established diplomatic relations, marks its 30th anniversary this month. The act stipulates that Washington will provide defensive weapons to Taipei and help prevent China's possible attempt to unify Taiwan by force. However, while cross-strait tension has eased significantly due to the rapid increase recently in contact between China and Taiwan, relations between the U.S. and Taiwan based on the Taiwan Relations Act are reaching a turning point... The administration of Premier Hu of China has shifted the focus of its Taiwan policy to 'peaceful unification,' under which Beijing will try to consolidate Taipei over the long term through economic and cultural exchanges. Taiwan's Ma administration is acting in step with this policy, and there is an unprecedented friendly atmosphere between Beijing and Taipei. However, there is concern that such 'detente' could 'hollow out' the Taiwan Relations Act... Due to fears of pressure from China, no nation other than the U.S. will sell weapons to Taiwan. There has been no change in the situation that the U.S. is the only hope for Taiwan, which has only limited weapon production capabilities."

13. "President Ma to Be Tested" The liberal Mainichi wrote from Taipei (4/23): "Taiwanese President Ma expressed his view during an interview with Mainichi on Wednesday that he would place policy priority on economic exchanges with China to improve Taipei's relations with Beijing. Although his policy is based on the view that such moves would be indispensable to boosting the Taiwanese economy, many Taiwanese people are worried that difficult problems, such as the removal of missiles pointing toward Taiwan, could be put off. President Ma will be tested on how he exercises his ability to deal with the political and military challenges he faces."

ZUMWALT